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**Contact: Paul Mounds 860-278-8888**

**Federal Funding Creates More than Three Hundred New Jobs in Hartford, Increases Access to Health Care Services**

***Larson Awarded National Award for his support of Community Health Centers***

***Hartford, CT-*** Today, Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) toured Charter Oak Health Center, Inc. (COHC) to tout the importance of community health centers to Connecticut's economic recovery and to announce new jobs created in Hartford as a result of federal funding he helped secure for both COHC and Community Health Services, Inc (CHS).

COHC and CHS were awarded \$11 million and \$7 million respectively in funding from the

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) to support capital improvements to the facilities and to expand access to health services for the region's underinsured and uninsured residents. Construction on the facilities will begin within the year, and will create hundreds of new jobs in Hartford, including 360 jobs at Charter Oak Health Center.

At the event, Alfreda Turner of COHC, Michael Sherman of CHS, and Evelyn Barnum of Community Health Center Association of Connecticut presented Congressman Larson with the 2010 "Distinguished Community Health Leadership Award" from the National Association of Community Health Centers. The award is given to members of Congress who have gone above and beyond in championing broader access to primary health care and strengthening the investment in Community Health Centers.

***"Charter Oak Health Center and Community Health Services are critical partners in maintaining the health and well-being of thousands of uninsured and underinsured residents in the Hartford area. The region has been hit hard economically. The demand for services from community health centers by the residents affected the most during this downturn is increasing every day,"*** said Congressman Larson.

Congressman Larson added ***"Community health centers are economic drivers in our state, creating needed jobs and spurring economic activity within our communities. In the Hartford region, \$24 million in Recovery Act funding to health centers will put \$40 million back into our local economy. The funding will allow community health centers to create hundreds of new construction and health services jobs and provide increased health services to our most vulnerable residents."***

A recent report by George Washington University on the economic impact of Recovery Act funding to community health centers found that the \$1.85 billion invested in health centers nationwide will create \$3.2 billion in new economic activity, including \$61 million in Connecticut.

***"We've truly counted on Congressman Larson as an important voice on behalf of health centers in our state and indeed across the country,"*** said Evelyn A. Barnum, CEO of the Community Health Center Association of Connecticut.

***"As economic conditions remain challenging, he also understands that health centers play a key role in providing access to affordable care and stand ready to grow and meet the challenges and demands of the future."***

***Congressman Larson's support in bringing Recovery Act resources to Hartford has been critical to maintaining access to medical, dental and mental health services for the tens of thousands of patients who rely on Charter Oak Health Center and Community Health Services,"*** said Michael Sherman, President of Community Health Services, Inc. ***"As we face drastic cuts to funding for the services we provide to Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens, this funding to sustain and enhance our services and our facilities is absolutely essential."***

The report also found that the funding will help health centers in Connecticut serve thousands of new patients. Due to the recent economic downturn, community health centers in Hartford and throughout the state have seen a drastic rise in patients. At COHC, from 2008 to 2009 the number of patient visits increased from 84,000 visits to 101,000, with a projection of 142,000 patient visits for 2010.

***"Congressman Larson played a critical role in Charter Oak Health Center's successful grant applications to the federal government,"*** said Alfreda Turner, President and CEO of Charter Oak Health Center, Inc. ***"He understands the importance of Community Health Centers in ensuring access to quality health care for Connecticut's low income populations and has been a staunch supporter of expansion of health centers during his entire tenure in Congress. His voice of support has earned him this special and well deserved leadership award by the National Association of Community Health Centers."***

Congressman Larson is also a co-sponsor of The Access for All America Act which would increase the authorization for community health centers progressively over a five year period to \$8.3 billion from its current level of \$2.2 billion.

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